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Force Health Protection Alert for Bottled Beverages

Heidelberg, Germany -- Military medical officials are advising US Department of Defense personnel and their families in Europe to be alert to possible tampering of plastic beverage bottles including water, juices and milk.

Recent reports from Italy indicate that unidentified persons have indiscriminately injected ammonia, bleach like solutions or soap-based solutions into plastic beverage bottles using a hypodermic needle just below the cap of the bottles. These were subsequently sold in supermarkets and vending machines in Italy. The specific brand names have not been released by officials.

In Europe there are numerous US approved sources for beverages, including some in Italy. These products are distributed throughout Europe and sold in military facilities.

To date no incidents have been reported in Vicenza province or at military installations in Europe. However, as a safety precaution, people purchasing plastic bottled beverages at military base stores or from the local economy should invert the bottle and squeeze in order to determine if the bottle leaks. People should also check for the presence of an abnormal odor.

In the event a bottle with a pinhole perforation is discovered it should be returned to the store where it was purchased. Local military police should be contacted if the purchase was made at a military location.